tass.com

Russia to respond firmly to abuse of its citizens' rights abroad

4 minutes

MOSCOW, December 09. /ITAR-TASS/. Moscow will respond firmly and uncompromisingly to violations of Russian citizens' rights abroad, the Foreign Ministry said on Monday, December 9.

It is Russia's consistent position that "human rights serve to ensure fuller respect for human dignity, unite countries and peoples and help build a fair world order," the ministry said in connection with Human Rights Day celebrated annually across the world on December 10 and the 65th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"They should not be turned into a tool for conducting foreign policy, putting pressure on sovereign states or inciting strife," the ministry warned.

"Human rights problems exist in all countries regardless of their political system, economic status, history, traditions and other factors. This is why the only way to advance human rights at the international level is respectful and equal cooperation between states, which excludes division into 'bad' and 'good' and which is based on collective response to existing human rights challenges," the Foreign Ministry said.

A key area of Russia's foreign policy is the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens abroad.

"We will act persistently to ensure full respect for their rights irrespective of sex, age or social status, we will firmly and uncompromisingly respond to violations and abuses, including in the context of judicial and legal protection, use of the native language, the freedom of assembly and association, and we will raise these issues at all levels with the governments of the countries where such violations occur," the ministry said.

The Foreign Ministry earlier advised Russians who may have problems with the American law to refrain from travelling to countries that have extradition agreements with the United States.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia advises Russian citizens to refrain from foreign trips, especially to the countries that have signed extradition agreements with the United States and if there are suspicions that American law enforcement agencies may take legal action against them," the ministry said.

"Russian citizens have been detained more and more often lately in different countries at the request of American law enforcement agencies for their further extradition and judicial prosecution in the United States. The latest such examples include the arrests of Dmitry Ustinov in Lithuania, Dmitry Belorossov in Spain, Maxim Chukharev in Costa Rica, and Alexander Panin in the Dominican Republic," the ministry said.

"Experience shows that the trials of those who were basically abducted and taken to the U.S. are biased, based on shaky evidence and conspicuously accusatory. As a rule, they result in illegitimate verdicts with long prison terms as in the case of Viktor

Bout and Konstantin Yaroshenko, who were sentenced to 25 and 20 years in prison, respectively," the ministry said.

"Russian consulate and consulates general provide consular and legal assistance to Russian citizens in difficult situations, but one cannot count on their successful resolution," the ministry said.

More than 120 countries have extradition agreements with the United States, including all of the EU and Latin American countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.